

Goal and Objective Development

This is an area that many schools struggle. For many of us, it is easy to set goals and objectives for ourselves but to set meaningful, measurable goals for a new school is much more difficult to articulate. However, this is an extremely important step in the planning stage of a school as well as the ongoing implementation of the educational program. This is the step that will provide you with guidance to define and measure whether you are successful and are following your mission statement. These goals and their objectives will be what you will be held accountable to by your authorizing charter entity, your parents, and the public. Therefore, this should be a major part of your planning phase.

The following are excerpts from “Developing Performance Goals and Measures: Guidance for Charter Schools” prepared by Margaret Lin (a Senior Associate at the National Association of Charter School Authorizers.) These will assist you with writing clear, concise, measurable goals. The entire paper can be downloaded and printed for better guidance and sample templates for goals, assessments, and benchmarks. It is available at the bottom of this page.

Excerpts –

“Goals should be SMART:

- **Specific** (and for educational goals, tied to learning **Standards**). A well-defined goal must be specific, clearly and concisely stated, and easily understood. Educational goals should be tied to learning standards that specify **what students should know and be able to do**, for each subject or content area and for each grade, age, or other grouping level. Equally important, educational goals should be developed with solid knowledge of students’ **baseline achievement levels**.
- **Measurable**. A goal should be tied to measurable results to be achieved. Measurement is then simply an assessment of success or failure in achieving the goal.
- **Ambitious and Attainable**. A goal should be challenging yet attainable and realistic. Educational goals should be based on a well-informed assessment of your school’s capacities and your students’ baseline achievement levels.
- **Reflective of Your Mission**. A goal should be a natural outgrowth of your school mission, reflecting the school’s values and aspirations.
- **Time-Specific with Target Date**. A well-conceived goal should specify a time frame or target date for achievement. We suggest setting short-term (annual) and long-term (3-5 year) targets for accomplishing goals.”

“Essential Principles for Developing Sound Educational Goals and Measures:

- Your mandate as the operator of a charter school is not just to teach well but also to **demonstrate objectively** – in ways that are **clear, understandable** and **credible** to a variety of external audiences – that you are doing so. Thus, you must measure and report educational progress precisely and extensively.
- Distinguish between **goals** and **measures**. Goals are the starting point, but require valid, reliable ways to measure and demonstrate that you have achieved them.

- Make sure that your goals are **clear, specific, and measurable**. They should also be **challenging yet achievable**.
- Your measures for attainment of those goals should describe **how you will assess progress**, and **how much progress will constitute success**.
- Educational goals must be connected to a well-defined set of learning standards for both **content** (what students should know) and **performance** (what students should be able to do). Such standards should exist for **every subject or content area** and **each grade, age or other grouping level** in the school. Focus on **outcomes** and **evidence of learning**, not inputs. For example, participation rates or the number of hours spent on an activity are *not* sufficient measures of success. Participation and investment of time are necessary first steps, but they are inputs, not **demonstrable** measures of learning and accomplishment.
- In developing goals ..., focus on **what's most important**. No more than eight to ten clear, well-chosen and carefully measured educational goals should allow you to provide a convincing story of your progress and achievements – and will be more effective than listing a score of vague, trivial, redundant or hard-to-measure indicators.
- The measures you develop to assess achievement of each goal, if not based on standardized assessments, should be demonstrably **valid** and **reliable**.”

“Defining Goals: Some Helpful Guiding Questions

Ask the following critical questions when defining your school's goals:

- *How will you know if your school is succeeding (or not)?*
- *What will be important characteristics of “educated students” at your school?*
- *What will students learn, know, understand and be able to do after a certain period of time, before promotion to the next grade level, or before graduation from your school?*
- *What should your graduates permanently possess as a result of their time in your school?”*

“Example: Multiple Measures Applied to a Single Goal

Goal: ‘All students at the Successful Charter School will become proficient readers of English within three years of enrolling at our school.’

Possible Measures:

- ‘Students at the Successful Charter School will improve their performance on the reading portion of the State ABC Test by at least 5% per year, on average.’
(*Measuring growth – Note: The proposed rate of improvement must be sufficient, based on information collected through baseline data, to meet the ultimate target goal in the specified time frame*)
- ‘Students at the Successful Charter School will perform at a level higher than their peers in the Successful School District on the English & Language Arts portion of Required State Examination in all grades, as demonstrated by a greater percentage of students passing and by a higher overall average student score.’
(*Assess comparative performance*)
- ‘All students at the Successful Charter School will read aloud and discuss an essay of literary significance before a panel of teachers and outside experts at the end of their 8th-and 10th-grade years, achieving a “Proficient” or higher rating from the panel of reach of the following skills: elocution, comprehension and analysis.’”
(*Performance-based assessment*)

To download the entire paper, click here: [“Developing Performance Goals and Measures”](#)